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## THE ETHICAL BASIS OF COLLECTIVISM.

THE Socialistic creed, as has been pointed out in one of the ablest expositions of its ethical tendency, has been subject like other creeds to the law of evolution. Both in its economic, its historical, and its ethical doctrine it has shown developments which to the hostile critic are mere proofs of internal disruption or perhaps insincerity, while to the more sympathetic they are rather signs of a healthy vitality. We are not here concerned with the systematic exposition of this development, but rather with an attempt to appreciate the phase at present reached. A brief reference, however, to some more primitive forms of Socialistic theory will help by way of comparison.

In its primitive form Socialism appears as a development of the Rousseauite principle of equality, and as such received its most scientific exposition in the Marxian doctrine of surplus value. The value of a commodity being measured, on this theory, by the quantity of labor required to produce it, it followed that all wealth was due to the laborer. But of the wealth that he produced the laborer only received a small proportion; in fact, in accordance with Ricardo's "iron law," which the Marxians accepted, only just enough to keep him alive and enable him to replenish the laboring population. The margin by which his actual product exceeded this "subsistence minimum" was wrongfully absorbed by the

capitalist and landlord, who had done nothing to bring it into existence. This exploitation of the laborer by the absorption of the surplus value of his industry was the inherent injustice of the capitalist *régime*. Now it is easy to riddle the economics of this theory with criticism. Value is not measured by labor alone. Between laborers there are qualitative as well as quantitative differences. The function of the captain of industry must be recognized as wholly distinct from that of the capitalist, and capital itself cannot justly be considered as contributing nothing to the production of wealth. But with all this destructive criticism it is easy to overlook the elements of truth contained in Marx's teaching. Marx lays down a certain ideal of abstract justice, which, like other abstract ideals, cannot be properly understood while it remains abstract, but nevertheless has its place in any true and comprehensive conception of social progress. The prevalent intellectual tendency of our time is to distrust abstract arguments. It is a tendency which has been growing for nearly a hundred years, and is in the main a natural enough reaction against the methods of the eighteenth century, while in England it appeals with especial force to the national dislike of anything which savors of theory or logic. But it is time to recognize that in its present form this tendency plays directly into the hands of political inertia. The upholder of things as they are does not require an ideal, because he does not need to be constructive. He has only to sit still and challenge the world to move him. At the present day he professes but little faith even in the past. He does not seriously believe in monarchy or aristocracy, or established churches, or anything but the security of his dividends. As long as he can rebut attack, his position is intellectually secure, and on the whole he finds his best weapon of defence in the cultivated and good-humored scepticism of which Mr. Balfour is the natural representative. Only let reason and logic be weak enough and the established fact will remain standing by mere force of inertia. Let us then weaken reason; let us prove that proof is non-existent; that there is no ideal beyond the actual, and that the laws of right and

wrong have no validity except as expressions of the existing order. Now, when the reformer admits these positions, as under the influence of the historical method and the spirit of relativity he has become prone to do, he is simply allowing his teeth to be drawn. An ideal is as necessary to the reformer as the established fact is to the conservative. Unless he knows precisely where he is going and what he expects to find when he gets there, he is a ship without steam and without rudder. A progressive movement, in short, must have an ideal, and an ethical ideal for the future must be in so far abstract as it is not yet realized and embodied in social institutions.

Furthermore, an ethical ideal cannot be based merely on existing tendencies. The existing tendency can take care of itself, and those Socialists make a very great blunder who base their position upon a fatalistic interpretation of history. If Socialism is coming of itself, why should any one incur the obloquy of calling himself a Socialist, or put himself to any trouble in securing the advent of the inevitable? Undoubtedly any sane theory of progress must take existing tendencies into account; but, so far from being dominated by these tendencies, it will seek to use them for its own purposes. There is not one tendency at work in society but many, and no one can say which of them is dominant until after the event. But any one who cares can say which he wishes to prevail, which tendencies or what elements in any given tendency seem to him to make for good and which for evil, and can shape his practical course accordingly. The true attitude of the ideal to the actual is that of a selective agency working like natural selection in the organic world upon such materials as come to hand, fostering what there is of good in each direction, and so framing a plan of action which is neither dominated by the facts nor removed from all contact with them, but is rather the expression of such possibilities of improvement as we find in the actual condition of things.

Of these actual conditions, one permanent constituent, it is apt to be forgotten, is the moral consciousness of men. The

conceptions of justice, equality, liberty, or humanity have been forces to be reckoned with in the last one hundred years of European history. And we can go a step further. These conceptions represent certain sides or aspects of the moral consciousness of mankind; and if that moral consciousness has any sort of validity, it must be capable of constituting a harmonious ethical order in which all its claims find satisfaction. When treated in isolation, indeed, the principles of justice and benevolence, or liberty and authority, or any others that we like to take, are apt, as moralists know, to harden themselves into exclusive and often partially incompatible rules. The more philosophic view being necessarily an attempt to harmonize is bound to wear something of a destructive aspect. It rubs off the corners of hard crystallizations of moral thought, and reduces all "absolute" rights and duties to a proper subserviency to some more general conception around which the whole of the moral consciousness may be taken to centre. Thus all the so-called natural rights may be shown to be relative to and limited by considerations of social welfare. But it is a mistake to pause here as though the task of philosophy were complete, when in fact it has only just begun. For the real problem is to find the place which each right and each duty recognized by the plain man would take in the system of rights and duties of which it is to be a part. It is not enough to say that the right of equality, the right to live and work, the prescriptive right of property are to be judged and measured by what is good for society as a whole. We want to know what place these rights would have in a sound conception of social welfare as attainable in Western Europe in the twentieth century, and, without pretending to any complete solution, I think we can say this much: that no conception of social welfare can be final in which these spontaneous, deep-lying, and constantly recurring claims of the moral consciousness do not find a legitimate satisfaction. We cannot make the principle of liberty or that of equality the sole touchstone by which an existing or an ideal scheme of society can be tested, but in Western Europe a society which wholly ignores either of them is doomed to failure.

The problem is to find a synthesis in which these and other such conceptions can live at peace with one another, being, as Aristotle would say, neither in excess nor in defect, but in that mean which is the good or rather the best. We conclude that in any true conception of social welfare those "abstract" ideas of rights and duties which faithfully formulate real though one-sided claims of the moral consciousness must, with whatever modifications, find legitimate scope and satisfaction.

It is thus with the abstract justice of the Marxian Socialism. The doctrine that the products of industry should belong to the producers contains a truth which should not be overlooked merely because we have discovered that it is not the whole truth. In the same way the doctrines of surplus value is, as as Marx stated it, an incorrect analysis of the facts, but it contains elements which a true and complete doctrine must embrace. It remains true that wealth does not go to its producers alone, but in large measure to non-productive classes, and that this is in part the reason why the immense development of our material resources has done so little to remove poverty from among us. And it follows that the institution of inherited property, enabling its owners to draw rent and interest not earned by their own exertions, must necessarily be called in question in any attempt to remodel the industrial system upon principles of equity.

But abstract justice is not the only thing to be considered. Equality is not the sole aim and object of society, though in some form or other it is a necessary element in any ethical ideal, since it stands for the truth that there is a common humanity deeper than all our superficial distinctions. But to model our political principles on this idea alone is just like modelling them on liberty alone, or on authority alone, or on prescription alone. The result is hopelessly one-sided, and the dreariness of the mechanical schemes of Socialism which from time to time appear may be taken as indicating the necessary failure of the abstract method. It is a trite charge against the Socialist that he would merely reduce all mankind to a dead level of mediocrity, and, as applying to a

system based on equality and nothing else, the accusation must be allowed some weight. An equality pursued as the sole end of government would be as dead as any other social ideal when isolated from the complementary conceptions of the social order. Equality is good in the sense that without it social and political life are poor things, not in the sense that social and political life exist only to secure it to the exclusion of every other consideration.

What we may call the fallacy of the abstract ideal is pushed to its furthest and most repulsive point when the economic mechanism of the Socialist theory is made into the ultimate end and object of the whole movement. This is done not only by critics, but by supporters of Socialism, and from both points of view is one of the gravest dangers of the situation. It is no doubt a necessary piece of mechanism that the functions of government should be in some degree extended, and in view of the Individualist theories which still linger on Socialists are often forced to contend for the abstract right to extend them to fields which they do not at present cover. Hence a temptation to hail any and every extension of State authority, whatever its principle or its object as a triumph for Socialism. Even the Agricultural Rating Act is hailed by the incautious or the paradoxically inclined as marking a step onward in the march of Collectivist ideas, and a measure designed to assist the clergy in maintaining an undivided authority over the administration of public funds is hailed as at least a blow to *laissez faire* Liberalism. This is *propter vitam vivendi perdere causas*, for the sake of Socialism to lose all hold of the reasons which make us Socialists. Nothing could be more threatening to the best hopes of human progress than an increase of the powers of government associated with a lowering of its principles. Neither a diminished nor an increased regimentation is an end in itself. Either may be good or bad according as the government in question is or is not likely to make a good use of its powers. And in point of historical fact this probability has decided the attitude of democratic reformers. As long as the government represented a narrow and reactionary class, its action in economic matters was naturally

opposed to the popular interest—witness Protection and the Combination Laws. The popular party was naturally in permanent opposition, and sought reasonably enough to curtail and restrict an authority which they could not hope to control. When the basis of government was changed and the legislature became responsible to the people as a whole, the consistent democrat modified his position. He is no longer in permanent opposition, but sees in the central authority a machine which he may hope to control in the interest of the public. Hence for the democrat the old *laissez faire* position is no longer logically tenable. But there is no need to run into the opposite extreme and applaud the running of the machine merely because it is a machine and is being run. Some Socialists, it would seem, have yet to learn that their synthesis must include all the elements of value represented by the older Liberalism. The State Socialism of Bismarck might have taught them something in this respect.

The true end of Socialism, then, is in the first place ethical. It is not the subordination of the man to the machine of State, but the use of the State for ethical, that is to say human, ends. Politics, it still seems necessary to repeat, are rightfully subordinate to ethics. They exist for the sake of human life, and in the modern world human life is wider and richer than State life. Now the essence of the ethical end is that it tries to comprehend human life on all sides, as a house in which there are many mansions, comprehensive in its possibilities, comprehensive also in its needs. Hence the ethical is necessarily opposed to the abstract view as represented by any single political dogma. How, then, are we to understand it?

An answer may be found if we remember that in a sense the ethical or human view is precisely that which in certain relations and for certain purposes we all understand. We are all human beings, and are all brought into direct contact with other human beings in the various personal relations of life. Without being philosophers and without any capacity for formulating general principles, we are all forced to some understanding of human life, its nature, and its needs,



and to some interest in its fortunes. And our personal relations, from the simplest and closest to the most complex and remote, tend to fall into two classes. In the struggle for existence and the fruits of existence our fellow-men are at once our most formidable rivals and our most potent allies. Love and hate, as Empedocles discovered, are the principles that govern the world. It has been the mistake of many modern Evolutionists to eliminate love from consideration, and to leave hate, rivalry, competition as the sole spring of movement in organic life. The truth is rather that hate, and war, and the struggle for self belong essentially to the inorganic sphere. It is precisely so far as divergent claims are not adjusted, as individuals are not organized into associations, as mutual dependence is not realized, that rivalry remains the principal means of subsistence and success. But from the lowest stages of organic life upward to civilized man there is an advance of integration which is constantly replacing the struggle of isolated atoms by the harmonious concurrence of interdependent parts. The lowest kind of compound animal is, I suppose, the cell colony, in which the association of parts is so loose that any component cell can emigrate when it chooses and live its own independent life. The loss of a limb matters little to the starfish and not as much as might be supposed to the limb. Even in the lower vertebrates, like the frog, the lower nerve centres retain a considerable degree of independence. But always as we mount the animal scale we come to a closer organization, in which, as between the myriads of living units which constitute the body, competition is reduced to very narrow limits, the health of the whole is essential to the life of each, and the cells secure their own maintenance by co-operating in the support of the entire body. In the relations of animals and of human beings to one another a somewhat similar development can be traced. Social life at any stage is a more or less organized structure as the case may be, and progress consists in the development of organization. At every stage competition is the law of unorganized, co-operation of organized, life.

I can perhaps best explain this by making clear what I do

not mean. I do not mean that the best state is that in which liberty is subordinated to order and progress left to take care of itself. I do not mean that the higher the social state the more complete is the sacrifice of the individual to common ends. On the contrary, such a constitution of society, though it may be necessary in a state of siege, is just the negation of the organic idea as I would wish it to be conceived. A mechanical unity is as much opposed to organic co-operation as is anarchy itself, which is, indeed, its natural correlative. The true conception of an organic society is one in which the best life of each man is and is felt to be bound up with the best life of his fellow-citizens. It is that in which the soul in bringing forth its fruit may be said, after Browning, to

Forward the general deed of man,  
And each of the many helps to recruit  
The life of the race by a general plan,  
Each living his own to boot.

As I shall at once be told that this is pretty but chimerical, and that you can no more eliminate repulsion and antagonism from human life than from the like poles of two magnets, I would invite attention to certain general tendencies of organic evolution which seem to have been too much neglected, and which go to show that the organic conception of society is a natural deduction from all that we know of those evolutionary forces which make for progress. I shall try to show that while evolution is not the same thing as progress, there is such a thing as progress in evolution; and it will be convenient to state in advance how this progress is to be conceived and on what it must be taken to rest. An evolutionary process as such consists merely in the development of one type into another, and there is no necessity that the second type should be any higher in the scale of creation than the first, if the term higher is to carry any sense of value as appreciated by human intelligence. For the success of the new type is determined merely by natural selection, that is, by the advantages possessed by this or that individual in the struggle for existence, whatever those advantages may be. It thus comes about as the result of a blind clash of forces, and not

in accordance with a rational plan of organization. This must be so as far as the reign of competition extends and individual lives are not related to one another according to any comprehensive scheme. But it will also be clear that such a correlation of the individuals of a species may be one among other methods by which a type may be preserved. And where the germ of such a correlation exists, it may be fostered by natural selection, like any other quality advantageous to the species. The natural organ of such organization is what at least in its higher developments we call the moral intelligence, in virtue of which the individual makes the good of this social group, and ultimately of the whole species to which he belongs, an object of supreme interest to himself. As this intelligence develops it comes to dominate the methods of natural selection, first suspending the struggle between individuals, and, secondly, substituting direct and purposive effort towards the good of the whole for the method of maintaining the type by the clash of atoms. Now what we call *progress* in evolution, or the evolution of higher types, we take to be identical with the advance of organization. History, if it has a meaning, is a record of the process by which elements of value and rational purpose have come to make themselves good by organized coherence. What we call the progressive organization of life is therefore for us an evolutionary process, and the only evolutionary process of value.

We will illustrate this position first in reference to the deficiencies of natural selection regarded as an agent in improvement. There is a process known as the Law of Compensation,\* which is generally acknowledged as a factor in the organic world, but has not, as far as I am aware, received the minute and careful study which it deserves. It may be explained roughly in this way. The tendency of the struggle for existence is to preserve an organism in virtue of some one or some very few eminent qualifications. An animal which has the average health and vitality of its species, but is a little stronger

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\* More generally, it is the law of Correlated Variation. The cases of "compensation" comprise all that need be noted for our purpose.

or a little faster, or has a harder shell or a sharper tooth, will have a sufficient advantage to determine the success of its descendants. But in developing any one of these advantages it may, and in many cases must, lose others. Strength, for example, almost of necessity involves bulk and weight, and if a given species is the prey of some materially stronger animal, variation in strength will make little difference to the chances of survival enjoyed by its members, while extra speed will be a most important point. In such a case, therefore, strength is likely to be sacrificed to speed, and we get a race developed like the deer, which is progressively less capable of standing up to its adversary, but more successful in running away. This is the law of compensatory sacrifice. The deer has, so to say, specialized on swiftness, and in doing so has abandoned strength. In the same way the human hand can be adapted to guiding the plough or to twisting ends of thread, but hardly to both at once. It must sacrifice one power to gain another.

Observe next that, as to the value of the qualities by which a type is preserved, natural selection exhibits a fine indifference. A conquers B and survives, but whether the result will be to produce a better or worse, a less or a more developed species can only be determined after the event. There is no greater or more common blunder than to treat natural selection as essentially an agent of progress. Whatever else progress may be, it at least involves a fuller and more many-sided life. But one of the commonest methods of maintaining yourself in the organic world is by reducing your wants, and therefore your capabilities, to a lower and a lower level, so that you may live without the supplies which you have not strength or intelligence or energy to gain. The lower type underbids the higher, so to say, and the species degenerates. It is a circumstance too little noted, that, whereas among all higher animals man the highest is everywhere dominant beyond dispute, it is only the low, miserable, degraded bacillus that wages war with him on equal terms, and in some places may be almost said to conquer and expel him. So great is the power of the deteriorated.

Speaking generally, we may put it that natural selection is

solely concerned with immediate success. You may possess qualities which, if you had but time to work them out, would ensure you lasting success and a place for your descendants above all competitors. But if while laying your plans you are accidentally eaten up, your long distance qualities, so to call them, will be of little avail, and your competitor, who has no brains, but a hard shell or quick legs, will survive and inherit your land. Hence we get this principle of progress in evolution. In so far as a type is forced to adapt itself to immediate necessities by the use of qualities incompatible with higher development there will be no progress, but merely change and perhaps deterioration of type. But if its higher qualities are strong enough to meet the exigencies of preservation from hour to hour, they will make of their exercise a means of development, and a higher type will be reached in which the best capabilities of the lower are realized and are dominant. In a word, in any evolution a new type will be higher or lower not according as it succeeds or fails, but according to the quality through which success is achieved.

If we take this fairly obvious principle in connection with the law of compensation, a further result is reached. If a perfect life is to be realized, the quality on which we rely for present safety must not involve the sacrifice of any other quality necessary to a more complete and satisfactory development. If the fulness of animal vigor is to be obtained, strength must not be sacrificed to swiftness, nor either of them to a length of neck, useful merely for gathering palm leaves inaccessible to better proportioned creatures. If a satisfactory social life is to be attained, the immediate necessities of order must not be allowed to crush the spirit of independence. Human history, indeed, and human biography are a long series of comments on the Law of Compensation. The great men who do not manifest the defects of their qualities may be almost counted on the fingers. And it is the same with every type of civilization, and perhaps with every movement which has arisen to correct recognized defects. I will take a single instance. The most signal defect in the intellectual achievements of the ancient world was what may be described as a

certain want of sense of the infinite, a tendency to contentment with the actual, and a disposition to make existing civilization the measure of all things. The gap was filled by Oriental religions, and finally by Christianity, and the adoption of some such religious scheme was a necessary preliminary to any future move forward. Yet in the form it took the new movement involved the break up of civilization, the disappearance of secular learning, the Inquisition, and the religious wars—in fine, some fifteen or sixteen centuries of delay before Western civilization could claim to be even on a level with the ancient world. On a smaller scale we have the same problem constantly before us in political life. The Liberalizing movement, for example, brought its own Nemesis in the opposition to the Factory Acts, and Socialist schemes, as we have seen, are liable to corresponding dangers.

All this is not mentioned by way of argument on behalf of Collectivism or any other plans of improvement, but merely as illustrating by contrast that gradual organization of life which we have taken to be the dominant feature of progressive development, and in which the Law of Compensation is slowly replaced by a more and more complete harmony among all the faculties employed. As life becomes rational, conduct tends to fall into a more or less coherent whole dominated by common principles and comprehensive ends. The occasions of the moment, even the obstacles and troubles of life, become means of grace to the resolute and intelligent will. Just as a little child makes every detail of its life into a game or a drama or a ritual, so the maturer man turns every occasion, sad or joyful, to rational account, and works out what is in him by its aid. But, as we saw before, the greatest of man's rivals are his fellow-men, and it is principally in his dealings with them that the difficulties of maintaining a constant hold on a rational or spiritual order appear.

The simplest way of maintaining your own position is the way of the strong man armed. The easiest way of getting through the crowd is the infallible process employed by Mr. Alfred Jingle, of elbowing the countenances of its component

members. And this primitive process, like other primitive processes, survives to the present day, to which, indeed, it has been reserved to glorify it as the royal road not merely to individual, but to social salvation. Rivalry, competition, the direct effort of each for himself to the exclusion of others, is in this view the way to secure the survival of the fittest. It is undoubtedly the way to secure the survival of those who are fittest to survive by that method, that is to say, the strongest and most self-willed and most unscrupulous, the man of blood and iron, the man of craft and guile. But it is utterly incompatible with anything like organization in social life as we have understood the term. And if there is anything like a social harmony possible, if, that is, society is capable of development to a better and a fuller life, it must be rather on the principle of love than of hate, by the recognition of the interdependence of its members rather than by their exclusiveness and mutual opposition. In short, the easiest and most obvious life consists in fighting for your own hand, and is exclusive of others and their interests. It may prosper to any extent, but it does not advance civilization. The higher and more difficult life is so to say inclusive of others. Their interests and hopes and feelings are a part of its own, incorporated in its own scheme, and bound up with its own happiness. It is harder to maintain, but, however short-lived, contributes something to the general purpose of the human race, the ultimate dominance of reason in things. Such a life can be lived in greater or less perfection by any individual according to his good pleasure at any time. But to attempt it may involve the extreme of self-sacrifice, since there is no one so much hated as a friend of men. But it is also possible that this spirit may prevail little by little in society itself, shared more or less consciously by all men, and capable of being carried further even by those who are not heroes or saints. This, according to our contention, is the true line of social progress, the development of that rational organization of life in which men freely recognize their interdependence, and the best life for each is understood to be that which is best for those around him. The attempt to shape

our social customs and institutions in this spirit is the aim and the principle of Collectivism.

Thus, to sum up this portion of our argument, so far as life is "inorganic," qualities are constantly developed to meet the exigencies of the moment which prove incompatible with the permanent requirements of a full and harmonious development, and individuals survive by fighting for themselves to the exclusion of the rest of their species. So far as life becomes "organized," all the qualities used by the individual tend to harmonious and uninterrupted development, while the life of the individual harmonizes similarly with that of the whole. It need hardly be said that the two harmonies are connected, since the higher qualities of the individual are precisely those by which his union with society is effected. Progress, then, as we understand it, consists in the steps whereby this "inclusive" or "organic" principle gradually makes itself good in the world of living beings against the "exclusive" tendencies of disorganization.

The conception of life which we have been trying to make clear is in no sense a new one, nor in any way the invention of Collectivism. On the contrary, it is part of our contention that it is as old as the ethical consciousness of man, and, indeed, expresses that which is distinctively ethical in a consciousness in which there is much that is adventitious, accidental, and inharmonious. For what passes as the moral consciousness of mankind is no more purely and unreservedly moral than mankind itself. It is a highly complex product of very various sentiments, many of them beautiful, most of them respectable, but some of them irrational and ugly. To make sure of this, it is only necessary to take the average moral sentiment of workaday life, consider not the phrases which it employs, but the application which it makes of them, and compare it with any well known example of the genuine ethical spirit, say the Sermon on the Mount, which comes almost as near as is humanly possible to unalloyed ethical truth. The difference resolves itself into this, that whereas the Sermon on the Mount is an expression of pure love, the average moral sentiment is an expression of regard for others



tempered by rivalry and fear. It is a compromise between the primitive struggle for existence and the sense of an identical nature and purpose. Hence, to illustrate by a single point, its regard for success as such, and its contempt and dislike of failure, its feeble criticism of successful violence and its self-righteous zeal in devising fresh degradation for those who are already disgraced. There can be little doubt that the average moral man thoroughly enjoys the punishment of an offender and feels his own righteousness enhanced thereby. Objection to cruelty seems to be a comparatively modern feeling, still in its infancy, and limited to a small percentage of people. An unauthorized shot at a rabbit is still a far more serious offence than beating a child with a poker, and *pecca fortiter* remains a tolerably safe motto. In the same spirit, when the average man talks of honor he is not really thinking of a moral quality, but of something which makes a man respected and feared by others, which puts him beyond the reach of insult or injury. It is only in this sense that a duel can be called an affair of honor, and it is in just the same sense that a nation's honor is thought to be more seriously menaced by a frank admission that it has done a wrong, than by the most unscrupulous use of force against the people that it has injured. In short, force, self-assertion, and all that contributes to the market value of man or woman, are natural objects of admiration for the consciousness which is immersed in the struggle for existence, and remain constantly at strife with the ideas of love, self-surrender, and mutual service which arise with the dawning consciousness of a common human nature.

This consciousness, we have said, is probably common in some shape or form to the whole race, but, as the historical student of ethics is aware, it is limited in its primitive form to a narrow circle. From the first, human development has been determined more by the competition of groups than by the rivalry of individuals. Natural selection, as operating on individuals, has probably had little to do with the advance of civilization; but the success of one family, one tribe, one city, or one nation in the struggle with another has been a potent

and constant influence. Now within certain groups rivalry is and always has been replaced in the main by co-operation. The family is by so much the most conspicuous example of what I mean that I will consider it alone. Imperfect, like other things human, it is nevertheless a striking and widespread example of the ethical spirit which I have tried to describe,—that is to say, it is a little society where the common welfare lies very close to the heart of each member, where self-sacrifice is cheerfully recognized as an honorable duty, and where the good of each is so much an object of real anxiety that more thought is taken for the weak than for the strong, and the deficiencies of any member are matter of honest regret rather than of secret satisfaction. If we pass outside the family to the relations of the average man to his immediate circle, we still find, if we are not prejudiced by cynicism, a good deal of the same spirit; at least, there is much genuine kindness and good-will, and a tolerably high standard of honor in mutual dealings. Now moral progress, so far as there has been any, has consisted primarily in levelling up the standard of conduct towards mankind in general to something like the level commonly realized in the narrower relationships which we have mentioned. The process has been described by Green, in a well-known chapter, as the extension of the area of the common good. From the evolutionist point of view, it is the substitution of co-operation for competition, of the inclusive for the exclusive method of maintaining life and achieving progress. Undoubtedly some advance has been made in this respect, if we compare the ancient world with modern civilization. We no longer make slaves of white men, and, with regard to Matabele and others, we at least pay a tribute to principle by calling it forced labor. In fact, it is proved already, and will go near to be thought shortly that there should be limits to our brutality in dealing with what we pleasantly call the inferior races. It may be said (if I may be allowed another reference to Aristotle) that in these respects we have only advanced from the stage of *ἀκολασία* to that of *ἀπρασία*. Certain general principles of humanity are pretty widely admitted, but all sorts of ingenious devices are in-

vented to avert their application in practice, and hence the moral warfare in our age is mainly a struggle against the almost inexhaustible resources of sophistry. In this spirit ecclesiastical authorities will tell us that the Sermon on the Mount is not meant to be taken literally. The authority is admitted, but its decisions conveniently made void. In the same way measures to prevent laundry women working more than fourteen hours a day are obstructed by the benevolent interest suddenly developed by fashionable ladies in the poor widow whose livelihood is threatened if she is not allowed to make herself a slave. Still, it is something to get first principles widely acknowledged. It indicates a certain advance, however small, and it is a promise of more, however slow. The cynical may say that it has developed hypocrisy in high places to a degree which will make the Victorian era proverbial as the epoch of Pharisaism, but all this is without doubt transitional. Our era will be at least equally conspicuous for the development of a genuine feeling for every kind of social improvement, the strength of which is measured by the very ingenuity shown in combating it.

Still, when all is said and done, it must be admitted that the standing paradox of the moral consciousness is the gap between what we may roughly call its personal and its impersonal dealings. The callousness with which the best of good fellows will acquiesce in outrages which he does not directly witness must always come with something of surprise. The indifference of kind-hearted men to massive suffering, the apathy with which loving fathers and mothers contemplate the massacre of children, is an ever renewed miracle like the sunrise or the burst of spring. Philip II. of Spain was an affectionate father, and Abdul Hamid is said to be loved in his own harem. And after all, why not? Is the gulf so deep between instigation and acquiescence in a crime, between active outrage and indifference? *Pecca fortiter*. Let us at least respect success and put it one step above the mixture of cynicism, apathy, and cowardice which constitutes the only rival form of statesmanship known to our generation.

We take it, then, that the distinctly ethical consciousness,

with its principle of mutual aid and its spirit of love and good-will, is a widespread force acting on nearly all men, but operative in a narrow sphere. And moral progress consists in directly or indirectly widening its influence. Not that it supersedes the reign of brute force, but rather that it qualifies it by some tincture of the human spirit. We continue to play a game against one another, but the rules of the game are gradually modified in the interests of humanity. Every such limitation of war and competition is a gain, and in the economic sphere such limitations as are imposed by Factory Acts, sanitary regulations, and even perhaps poor laws, have long been admitted as the most important applications of the Collectivist principle in modern legislation. They run parallel with the abolition of explosive bullets and the protection of the wounded and other regulations of war by the Geneva Convention. When all the world is one family, the millennium will have been reached. Short of that it is possible to moralize rivalry, and possibly, in the spirit of the inclusive method, to turn it into a means of grace. The writer already referred to has pointed out that in Collectivist Ethics emulation in the public service would naturally supersede competition for private gain.

The Collectivist has been supposed, absurdly enough, to put material comfort above character, but the truth is that the question between him and his critics is not whether character is important, but what sort of character is desirable. On this point the Collectivist has his own view, and, as to his critic's conception of what is admirable in character, it is a very strong view. Hard self-reliance does not especially appeal to him, and among those things which may be injurious to character he would reckon the constant repression of the natural movements of kindness. Nor is the Collectivist unaware that individuals are responsible agents and must in a great degree take the consequences of their misdeeds. But I think he would limit the evil consequences to those which are really necessary or essential to the interests of society, and he would certainly take very special care that they should not fall upon those connected with the wrong-doer or

upon any one but the wrong-doer himself. When children are in question, the principle of responsibility cuts two ways; for, if we take a responsibility off the parent by saving the child, we neglect a common responsibility if we leave the child to its fate. And if the one course impairs the character of the parent, how does the other affect our own? What it finally would throw upon society, and what it would leave to the individual, is a matter which Collectivism has to thresh out in each case upon its own merits; but there can be no doubt that its general tendency is so to organize life as to make its responsibilities much more definite and a good deal less easy to escape.

To bring the somewhat diversified strands of our argument together, we may say first that the tendency of modern Collectivism is to absorb the abstract ideals of earlier political theories into a comprehensive and distinctly ethical system. This ethical system is based on the substitution of the principle of peace on earth and good-will towards men for the principle of rivalry and war. It thus aims at extending a process which has always been going on so far as moral progress has been a reality, that of qualifying the methods of competition by the social spirit realized in the more intimate personal relations. And in so doing it reveals itself as a phase in a still wider evolutionary process, whereby in the higher races a purposive and intelligent organization of life, inclusive of the whole species, is gradually substituted for the war of all against all by which the survival of types is determined at a lower stage.

L. T. HOBHOUSE.

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD.